



COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2026

SW1000(A2) Introduction to the Practice of Social Work – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

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OFFICE Upon Request

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CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: An introduction to the methods and skills used in effective, ethical, and anti-oppressive social work practice. The historical and theoretical contexts of social work will be examined as well as the impact of marginalization and oppression on individuals, families, and communities. Appropriate use of communication, counselling, and effective interview methods will be applied to example scenarios as students develop awareness of the factors that shape the practice of social work.

PREREQUISITE(S):
None

COREQUISITE(S):
None

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Ives, N., Denov, M., & Sussman, T. (2020). Introduction to social work in Canada: Histories, contexts, and practices (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.

APA Style Guide (7th Edition). It is recommended students purchase this text or become familiar with helpful websites to learn how to write and structure academic papers.



* Additional readings may be distributed in class or be posted onto the MyClass site

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the historical and theoretical contexts of social work.
- Identify and analyze the effects of marginalization and oppression on diverse populations.
- Apply anti-oppressive principles to social work practice.
- Utilize effective communication, counselling, and interview techniques in a professional context.
- Reflect on their own values and biases to foster ethical and inclusive practices.
- Collaborate effectively with peers to analyze case studies and propose solutions grounded in anti-oppressive frameworks.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.alberta.ca>

** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. **Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS:

Assignment	Description	Grade	Due Date
Quizzes	Content Quizzes x2	30%	Oct 16 th / Nov 20 th
Assignment 1	Values Analysis Written Paper	30%	Sep 25 th
Assignment 2	Group Project: Critical Perspectives on the History of Social Work	30%	Dec 4 th
Assignment 3	In Class Participation	10%	Dec 7 th

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most institutions will not accept your course for transfer credit IF your grade is less than C-.

Grading Chart

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Week / Dates	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Sep 4	No Class start readings		
Sep 7 no class	No Class start readings		
Sep 11	History of Social Work and Social Welfare in Canada	Chapter 1	
Sep 14/18	Values – Personal & Professional / Ethics in Social Work	Chapter 2	
Sep 21/25	Theories and Practice Frameworks	Chapter 3	Assignment 1
Sep 28 Oct 2	Social Work with Individuals and Families	Chapter 4	
Oct 5/9	Social Work with Groups and Communities	Chapter 5	
Oct 12 No Class		Chapter 6	
Oct 16	Social Work and Health		Quiz 1
Oct 19/23	Social Work with Children	Chapter 7	
Oct 26/30	Indigenous Peoples and Social Work	Chapter 8	
Nov 2/6	Social Work with Immigrants & Refugees / International Social Work	Chapter 9/10	
Nov 9/13	Break – No Classes		
Nov 16/20	Social Work and Sexual & Gender Diversity	Chapter 11	Quiz 2
Nov 23/27	Social Work with People with Disabilities/Social Work with Aging Presentations	Chapter 12	Presentations
Nov 30 Dec 4	Presentations		Presentations
Dec 7	Class reflections		



Assignment 1 –Content quizzes- 15% x 2 (30%)- students will complete 2 open book quizzes based on assigned readings and content presented in class. Quizzes will be posted to the MyClass site.

Assignment 2 Values Analysis Written Paper 25% 2 1st person, APA format (headings are strongly encouraged)

Reflect on personal values and ethical frameworks and examine how they influence social work practice. In this assignment, you will explore your own personal values, beliefs, and attitudes, and analyze how they may impact your practice as a future social worker. Consider how your cultural background, upbringing, and life experiences shape your perspectives on issues such as poverty, marginalization, and oppression. Reflect on how these personal values align with or conflict with the ethical guidelines and values of the social work profession. This assignment will contain the following:

- A written reflection (5-6 pages) addressing the following questions:
 - What are your core values (choose 3-4), and how are they shaped by your personal background?
 - How do your values align with the ethics of social work (e.g., respect for human dignity, social justice)?
 - In what ways can your personal values influence your practice in terms of client relationships and decision-making?
 - How will you ensure that your values do not interfere with providing anti-oppressive, client-centered care?
- Provide references to key ethical principles from the ACSW/CASW Code of Ethics or similar social work ethics frameworks.
- Use a minimum of 3 references
- APA format but can use first person language

Group Project: Critical Perspectives on the History of Social Work

- History has shaped the values, ethics, and practices of social work. While the profession has contributed to positive social change, it has also participated in systems that have caused harm. Understanding this history is essential to becoming an ethical and reflective social worker.
- Working in groups of 2-3 students, you will select a significant historical event, policy, movement, or issue that has influenced the development of social work. Your task is to critically analyze the topic, examining not only what happened, but also why it happened, who benefited, who was harmed, and how this history continues to influence social work practice today.
- Your presentation should encourage discussion and critical reflection rather than simply providing historical facts.
- 15 minutes presentation length with room for 5 minutes discussion/questions. 20 minutes total.
- APA formatting/minimum of 3 references.

Assignment 4: In-Class Participation 15% of final grade

Active participation is an essential component of professional learning in social work. Engaging in discussions, skill practice, and collaborative learning supports the development of self-awareness, communication skills, and ethical practice. This assignment encourages students to reflect on their engagement and growth throughout the course.

Throughout the semester, students are expected to:

- Attend class regularly and arrive on time.
- Contribute meaningfully to discussions, skill-building activities, and breakout sessions.
- Demonstrate respect, curiosity, and professionalism in group interactions.
- Provide and receive constructive feedback with peers.

At the end of the semester, submit a reflection (approximately 250 words) that addresses the above expectations and give yourself a score of 1 out of 10. The instructor will then review this score and either agree or change the score based off the above criteria.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Students are expected to attend all classes and actively participate. Being prepared means completing assigned readings and tasks in advance and coming ready to contribute to meaningful discussions that value diverse perspectives and ideas.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is permitted, but it must be used responsibly. AI should be a tool to support and enhance your learning, not replace it. For example, AI may be used to help brainstorm, organize, or edit your work, but it must not be used to generate full assignments or bypass the learning process. Improper use of AI may have academic consequences.

Social Work Code of Ethics: Social work students should know, respect and understand the CASW code of ethics (2024), the ACSW (2005) code of ethics and the standards of practice (2023).

Social Work Diploma Handbook: It is each student's responsibility to become familiar with the student handbook and follow the expectations and guidelines set out.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Assignments submitted late may receive a late penalty of 5% for each day beyond the due date. Assignments are to be submitted via the Course myClass. No assignments will be accepted by email.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, Claude) may be used to support learning, including brainstorming, developing search terms, locating potential sources, organizing ideas, editing, and citation support. AI should support, not replace, the student's own critical thinking, analysis, reflection, and engagement with course materials.

Any use of AI that contributes to an assignment must be acknowledged and cited in the reference list, including use for literature searches, locating sources, or citation assistance. Students are responsible for verifying all AI-generated information and references by locating and reviewing the original source. Submitting AI-generated work without appropriate acknowledgement may be considered a breach of academic integrity.